

Have a Safe

Christmas



Christmas is exciting, but it can be stressful for your dog; even dangerous.

Regular Routine

Try to maintain your dog's regular routine. Feed and walk him at his usual time. Make an effort to spend quality time together, away from the hustle and bustle. It'll be good for both of you!

Fatal Foods

Watch for tummy upsets. If your dog is not accustomed to human food, resist the temptation to treat him to table scraps.



Be particularly careful with turkey leftovers. A sudden rush of all those fatty bits might cause pancreatitis or liver damage. Cooked turkey bones could puncture the intestines. Chocolate and onions are toxic to dogs, and some can develop sudden, allergic reactions to grapes and raisins. Be sure to keep garbage out of reach. String, cheesecloth and tinfoil covered in food or grease pose great temptations but can cause life-threatening blockages. See your veterinarian if anything is out of the ordinary occurs.

Ask visitors to keep their purses and bags out of your dog's reach, to avoid any accidental ingestion of sweets, chocolates or even personal medications! Then check and make sure that your guests do so. People easily forget if they do not routinely live with dogs or young children.

Dangerous Decorations

To avoid a toppled Christmas tree, keep the dog out of the room unless you're in there to supervise. Anchor it to the wall or ceiling to prevent toppling, or even better, put the tree behind a barrier. To make it look less "utilitarian", an ex-pen barrier can be decorated with Christmas cards, fabric in Christmas colours, or similar non-dangerous decorations. Tinsel, garlands, gift wrapping ribbons, string and elastics can cause serious internal damage if ingested.

Make sure your dog always has fresh water in his bowl and that he cannot get at the Christmas tree water.

Secure electrical cords at least as well as you would for an 18-month old baby! Some dogs cannot resist that 'chew toy' cord!

Snow globes may be made from glass or plastic. Shards can be life-threatening if ingested. Some globes also have anti-freeze-like liquids inside to make the snow inside fall slower.*

Scented candles may attract because of their sweet smell, taste or texture, so put them up high and out of reach. Never leave a lit candle unsupervised!

Dangers out of Doors

Rock salt can burn your dog's paws. Keep your dog off rock salt where possible, and be sure to rinse and dry his paws after each walk.

** Watch out for spilled antifreeze. It tastes sweet. Three tablespoons may be enough to kill a medium sized dog. The dog may act drunk. Take him to the vet immediately! After several hours your dog may seem better, but the substance may have made its way to the liver and kidneys and is now doing irreparable damage. It may not look like it, but THIS IS AN EMERGENCY!*

Company's Coming

If your dog has not learned to go to his mat when the doorbell rings, make a habit of putting him away in his kennel or in a separate room while you open the door, to keep him safe. If you are expecting visitors, take the opportunity to train doorbell manners! Before your dog comes out to greet the guests, teach them how to turn away from the jumping dog, then bring him out on leash and heavily reinforce sitting. Make sure to stop yourself from jerking on the leash! The leash is there to limit your dog's range of movement, not for jerking on! Then promise yourself to finish his Sit- and his Door Manners-training immediately after the holidays!

Unless your dog is already firm and close friends with any potential visiting pets, you might want to suggest to your guests that they leave their pets at home. Because of all the excitement at this time of year, your dog is likely to be more aroused than normally, and so will the visiting pooch be, too. You have enough distractions already as a host, without also having to manage a volatile dog-dog relationship!

Instil into your guests that your dog is *In Training*, and what the house rules are, including to not feed your dog from the table. Lots of fatty tidbits can make your dog very ill. If they can't stop themselves from giving him treats, give them a selection of his regular food or treats to hand out.

CHILDREN? => SUPERVISE, SUPERVISE, SUPERVISE!!!

ALWAYS supervise the interactions between dogs and children under the age of 12. Both parties will be over-stimulated. Children are unlikely to remember to follow the rules. Make sure your dog has a safe place to go to, to get away from the children. If you are too busy to supervise, either appoint a dog-savvy, responsible and reliable guest who can tell when the dog needs a break, or – even better - put your dog away in his crate or in a separate room with a Kong stuffed with delicious foods.

Your Veterinarian

Your vet may have reduced hours over the holidays. Find out ahead of time, and then know where your animal emergency clinic is. If your vet is not immediately available, you can also call the

Animal Poison Control Center 1-888-426-4435

A consultation fee may be applied to your credit card, but it may save your pet's life. So put that phone number on the fridge door, next to your own and the emergency vet clinics' details.

More advice on potential poisonous substances can be obtained from the APCC website at **www.asPCA.org/apcc**

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